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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: CUBA: MFA PREVIEWS 2010 BILATERAL EVENTS

Classified By: Political External Chief Eric Green for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a January 19 meeting with poloff, MFA Cuba desk First Secretary Anna Kosenkova highlighted several upcoming events between the GOR and Cuba and discussed the increasing political and economic ties between the two countries. She said that Russia and Cuba are planning the following events in 2010:

--During the week of January 25, Russia will host a preparatory meeting for the April 2010 Russian-Cuban Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Commercial, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation. The preparatory meeting will take place in Moscow with several working-level Cuban officials attending.

--On February 11-13, Foreign Minister Lavrov will participate in the 9th Annual Havana Book Exhibition as a special invited guest. Lavrov will lead a delegation that includes heads of the Russian Ministry of Culture and the Russian Press Agency, along with famous Russian writers and journalists presenting at the Exhibition. During the visit, Cuba will also host a series of programs showcasing Russian culture and art.

--In April, Cuba will host a meeting of the Russian-Cuban Intergovernmental Commission. Kosenkova noted that Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin would likely lead the Russian delegation. Sechin's last visit to Cuba was in July 2009 and resulted in several agreements, including a \$150 million loan for Cuba to purchase Russian agricultural machinery.

--Kosenkova noted that the MFA was planning a May 8 event in Moscow to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Cuba.

¶2. (C) When asked whether any Russian military ships or planes were scheduled to visit Cuba in the upcoming year, Kosenkova said that she was unaware of any plans for these types of visits. However, she noted that, from her experience on the Cuba desk and at the Russian Embassy in Havana, the MFA and the Ministry of Defense did not usually coordinate on planning for ship visits until very late in the process.

¶3. (C) Kosenkova also highlighted the current economic ties between Russia and Cuba, commenting that efforts in this area did not yet match the impetus seen in the bilateral political agenda. She said that currently there are several projects underway in Cuba involving oil, energy, transport, pharmaceuticals, and civil aviation. She noted that Russia was currently providing humanitarian aid to Cuba in the form of grain shipments, with plans to send 100,000 tons of grain to Cuba this year. Also, the GOR plans to increase the number of scholarships granted to Cubans; 100 Cuban students received scholarships in 2009 to study in Russian universities. Lastly, Kosenkova inquired about two items

that she said the MFA was particularly following: 1) future prospects for the U.S. government lifting the Cuban embargo; and 2) whether U.S. officials had plans to meet with their Cuban counterparts.

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